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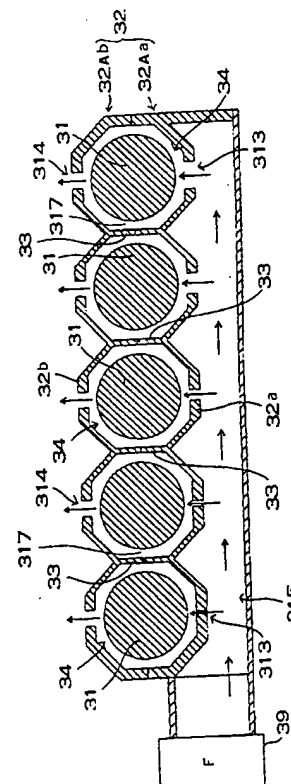
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(54) **Cooling arrangement for power supply apparatus**

(57) The power supply apparatus has a plurality of power modules (1), a holder-case (2), and a fan (39,49). The holder-case (2) is box shaped with a first surface plate (2a) and second surface plate (2b) as two surfaces, and contains a plurality of power modules (1) arranged laterally, parallel, and in the same plane. Walls (3) are provided between the plurality of laterally arranged power modules (1), and divide the holder-case (2) interior into a plurality of rows of partitions (4). One row of power modules (1) is disposed in each partition (4) row. The power supply apparatus uses the fan (39,49) to divide and induce air flow through flow inlets (13) in the first surface plate (2a) into the plurality of partitions (4), and expels air out exhaust outlets (14) in the second surface plate (2b) to cool power modules (1) disposed inside each partition (4).

FIG. 3



Description

Background of the Invention

[0001] This invention relates to a high current power supply apparatus primarily used to power a motor to drive a vehicle such as a hybrid or electric car.

[0002] A high current, high output power supply apparatus used as a power source for a motor to drive an automobile contains power modules. Power modules are a plurality of series connected batteries, and they are in turn connected in series to raise the output voltage of the power supply apparatus. The purpose of this is to increase the output of the driving motor. Extremely high currents flow in a power supply apparatus used for this type of application. For example, in a vehicle such as a hybrid car, when starting to move or accelerating, battery output must accelerate the car, and extremely high currents over 100A can flow. High currents also flow during short period, rapid charging.

[0003] In a high current power supply apparatus, forced cooling is required when battery temperature rises. In particular, in a power supply apparatus with many power modules inserted in vertical and horizontal columns and rows in a holder-case, it is important to uniformly cool each power module. This is because performance degradation will result for a battery which rises in temperature when battery cooling is non-uniform.

[0004] Systems which house a plurality of power modules in a holder-case and cool each power module more uniformly are cited, for example, in Japanese Patent Applications HEI 10-270095 (1998) and HEI 11-329518 (1999). As shown in the cross-section view of Fig. 1, the power supply apparatus of the former application cools internally housed power modules 21 by forcing air to flow from air intakes 23 which form the base of the holder-case 22 to exhaust outlets 24 which form the top of the holder-case 22. Cooling adjustment fins 25 are disposed inside the holder-case 22 to adjust the speed of air flowing over the surfaces of power modules 21.

[0005] In a holder-case 22 of this configuration, air flows more rapidly over the surfaces of power modules 21 disposed near the top than those near the bottom. The purpose of this is to avoid a temperature differential between power modules 21 at the top and bottom. If the flow rate of air passing over the surfaces of power modules 21 at the top and bottom is made the same, power modules 21 at the bottom will be cooled more efficiently than those at the top because air flowing over the surfaces of power modules 21 at the bottom has a lower temperature.

[0006] To make the flow rate of air over power modules 21 at the top faster than the flow rate over those at the bottom, the gap for air flow between the cooling adjustment fins 25 and the power modules 21 is gradually made narrower towards the top of the holder-case 22. This is because air flow becomes faster as the gap for air flow becomes narrower.

[0007] This type of power supply apparatus cools power modules near the bottom with cool air and power modules near the top with high flow rate air to establish a more uniformly cooled environment for power modules at both the top and bottom. However, it is extremely difficult to cool upper and lower power modules under very uniform conditions in this type of system. This is because the temperature of cooling air for power modules at the bottom is low, and the temperature of cooling air for power modules at the top becomes high. It is difficult to cool upper power modules with the same efficiency as lower power modules even by increasing the flow rate over power module surfaces when upper power module cooling air temperature has become high. For this reason power modules near the air intakes can be cooled efficiently, but power modules near the exhaust outlets are difficult to cool efficiently and this system has the drawback that temperature differential develops over power modules housed in the holder-case. This has the deleterious effect that power modules, which are near exhaust outlets and very difficult to efficiently cool, become hot and easily degraded.

[0008] As shown in the cross-section view of Fig. 2, the power supply apparatus cited in the later patent application directs cooling air into the holder-case 27 from intermediate positions along the holder-case 27. Air directed into the holder-case 27 from intermediate positions supplies cool air to regions near the outlet and makes the inside temperature of the holder-case 27 uniform. This system can reduce the temperature differential across the holder-case 27, but the flow rate of air inside drops due to air entering from intermediate positions along the holder-case 27. To efficiently cool power modules 26, it is important to lower the temperature of the cooling air, but it is also important to increase the flow rate of air over the surfaces of the power modules 26. Even if cooling air temperature is lowered, the region of air immediately in contact with the surface of a power module will rise in temperature if flow rate slows. Since a power module 26 is cooled by the air in immediate contact with its surface, it cannot be efficiently cooled if the temperature of this region of air becomes high.

[0009] The present invention was developed to correct these types of drawbacks seen in prior art power supply apparatus. Thus it is a primary object of the present invention to provide a power supply apparatus which can cool all of the plurality of power modules housed in a holder-case more uniformly and effectively prevent battery performance degradation caused by temperature differentials.

[0010] The above and further objects and features of the invention will more fully be apparent from the following detailed description with accompanying drawings.

Summary of the Invention

[0011] The power supply apparatus of the present invention is provided with a plurality of power modules 1,

a holder-case 2 which houses the power modules 1 arranged in rows in a parallel fashion and which cools the power modules 1 by passing air through the inside of the case, and a fan 9 which forcibly supplies air to the holder-case 2 or intakes air through the holder-case 2. The holder-case 2 is box shaped and has a first surface plate 2a and a second surface plate 2b disposed on opposite sides. A plurality of power modules 1 are arranged side-by-side in a parallel fashion and in a single plane along the first surface plate 2a and second surface plate 2b. Further, walls are established between the plurality of power modules 1 laterally arrayed in the holder-case 2. The walls extend from the first surface plate 2a to the second surface plate 2b to divide the interior into a plurality of rows of partitions 4, and one row of power modules 1 are disposed in each partition row. In addition, the holder-case 2 has flow inlets opened through the first surface plate 2a to divide air flow and direct it into cooling ducts 17 formed by the plurality of partition rows. Exhaust outlets 14 are also opened through the second surface plate 2b to expel air which has passed through the plurality of partition cooling ducts 17. The power supply apparatus uses the fan 9 to divide and divert air flow through the first surface plate 2a flow inlets 13 into the plurality of partitions 4, passes air through the cooling ducts 17 to cool the power modules 1, expels air which has performed its cooling function through second surface plate 2b exhaust outlets 14, and thereby cools the power modules 1 disposed inside the plurality of partition columns.

[0012] This configuration of power supply apparatus has the characteristic that all of the plurality of power modules housed in the holder-case can be more uniformly cooled, and battery performance degradation caused by temperature differentials can be effectively prevented. This is because the power supply apparatus of the present invention disposes a plurality of power modules side-by-side in a parallel fashion in a single plane, divides the interior of the holder-case with walls into a plurality of rows of partitions, disposes one row of power modules in each partition row, and causes air to divide and flow from the flow inlets of the first surface plate through the plurality of partitions and out the exhaust outlets of the second surface plate to cool the power modules disposed in the plurality of partition rows. Since one row of power modules is separately disposed in each partition row in this configuration of power supply apparatus, each power module is independently cooled by air passing through its cooling ducts without any influence from other power modules. Further, since cooling air passing through each partition cools only one row of power modules, that cooling air is fresh and not warmed by other power modules, and cooling can be extremely efficient. In this manner, a power supply apparatus which can cool each power module under ideal conditions can efficiently and uniformly cool all of the plurality of power modules.

[0013] The power supply apparatus of the present in-

vention can be provided with an air inlet duct at the surface of the first surface plate. In this power supply apparatus, air flow can be directed from the air inlet duct, into the flow inlets, and through the partitions. Further, flow inlets opened through the first surface plate can be made smaller at the upstream end of the air inlet duct than at the downstream end of the air inlet duct. This configuration of power supply apparatus can uniformly supply cooling air to all partitions. In addition, the power supply apparatus may have a two tiered holder-case with the two tiers disposed in a parallel fashion in mutual opposition around the air inlet duct.

[0014] The power supply apparatus of the present invention can also be provided with an air outlet duct at the surface of the second surface plate. In this power supply apparatus, air passed through each partition and out each exhaust outlet is re-combined in the outlet duct and expelled from the system. Further, exhaust outlets opened through the second surface plate can be made larger at the upstream end of the outlet duct than at the downstream end of the outlet duct. This configuration of power supply apparatus can uniformly supply cooling air to all partitions. In addition, the power supply apparatus may have a two tiered holder-case with the two tiers disposed in a parallel fashion in mutual opposition around the outlet duct.

[0015] In the power supply apparatus of the present invention, the flow inlets and exhaust outlets can be made as slits extending in the lengthwise direction of the power modules.

[0016] In the power supply apparatus of the present invention, the power modules can be shaped as circular cylinders, the cross-sectional shape of the inside of the partitions housing the power modules can be polygonal with greater than or equal to eight sides, or the cross-sectional shape of the inside of the partitions can be circular to elliptical. In this power supply apparatus, cooling ducts are established between power module surfaces and partition inner walls, and air flow in the partitions flows along power module surfaces via these cooling ducts.

[0017] In the power supply apparatus of the present invention, cooling ducts can be made approximately the same width around the entire perimeter of each power module.

[0018] Further, in the power supply apparatus of the present invention, retaining projections extending from partition inner walls of the first surface plate and second surface plate can be formed by single piece construction to hold power modules in place. In this power supply apparatus, the ends of these retaining projections contact the surface of a power module and hold that power module in place inside the partition.

[0019] Still further, in the power supply apparatus of the present invention, the power modules can be shaped as circular columns, and these power modules can be disposed at partition centers.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0020]

Fig. 1 is a cross-section view of a related art power supply apparatus.

Fig. 2 is a cross-section view of another related art power supply apparatus.

Fig. 3 is a side cross-section view of an embodiment of the power supply apparatus of the present invention.

Fig. 4 is a side cross-section view of another embodiment of the power supply apparatus of the present invention.

Fig. 5 is a side view of a power module contained in a power supply apparatus.

Fig. 6 is an exploded cross-section view of the power module shown in Fig. 5.

Fig. 7 is a lengthwise cross-section view of the power supply apparatus shown in Fig. 4.

Fig. 8 is an oblique cross-section view of another embodiment of the power supply apparatus of the present invention.

Fig. 9 is a cross-section view of another embodiment of the power supply apparatus of the present invention.

Fig. 10 is a cross-section view of another embodiment of the power supply apparatus of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Invention

[0021] The power supply apparatus shown in Figs. 3 and 4 is provided with a plurality of power modules 31 41, a holder-case 32 42 which houses these power modules 31 41, and a fan 39 49 to cool power modules 31 41 in the holder-case 32 42. The holder-case 32 42 holds the power modules 31 41 arranged in a parallel fashion of a plurality of rows, and cools the power modules 31 41 with air which passes through the case.

[0022] A power module 31 41 is a plurality of rechargeable batteries or high capacitance super-capacitors joined in a linear fashion. For example, power modules 31 41 may have six series connected rechargeable batteries joined in a straight line. A power module using super-capacitors has a plurality of super-capacitors connected in parallel or series. However, a power module may also be made up of a single rechargeable battery or super-capacitor. The power module 31 shown in Fig. 5 has circular cylindrical rechargeable batteries 36 joined in a straight line by dish-shaped connectors 37. Electrode terminals 35 comprising a positive electrode terminal 35A and a negative electrode terminal 35B are connected at the ends of a power module 31.

[0023] The structure for connecting rechargeable batteries 36 in a straight line with dish-shaped connectors 37 is shown in Figs. 5 and 6. In a power module 31 of this structure, a disk region 37A of a dish-shaped connector

37 is weld-connected to the positive terminal of a circular cylindrical battery 36. The disk region 37A of the dish-shaped connector 37 is provided with projections 37a for welding to the positive terminal of the circular cylindrical battery 36. When the projections 37a of the dish-shaped connector 37 are welded to the positive terminal, welding electrode rods push on the top surfaces of the projections 37a. To prevent short circuits between the dish-shaped connector 37 and the circular cylindrical battery 36, a ring-shaped Insulator 38 is sandwiched between the dish-shaped connector 37 and the circular cylindrical battery 36.

[0024] In addition, a circular cylindrical battery 36 is inserted into the dish-shaped connector 37 flange region 37B to connect the negative terminal of the circular cylindrical battery 36, which is its outer case 36A, with the flange region 37B. Similar to the disk region 37A, the flange region 37B also has projections 37a provided on its inner surface for welding to the battery outer case 36A. During welding, welding electrode rods push on the outsides of the flange region 37B projections 37a.

[0025] Although not illustrated, series connected batteries can be joined without using dish-shaped connectors by weld-connection to the facing sides of lead-plates bent in U-shapes. In this power module, battery terminals are welded to facing sides of U-shaped lead-plates by passing a high current pulse through the batteries in the direction of battery discharge. Further, metal plates can also be sandwiched between positive and negative battery terminals, and a high current pulse can be passed through the batteries in their direction of discharge to weld the metal plates to the battery terminals.

[0026] Still further, positive and negative battery terminals of a power module can also be directly welded together with no intervening metal plate between batteries. Here, conical projections are provided on the upper surface of a battery sealing plate, which is the positive electrode terminal, and these projections are welded to the negative electrode terminal of an adjacent battery by passing of a high current pulse.

[0027] Power modules 31, which have a plurality of rechargeable batteries 36 connected in series, have the positive side of the batteries 36 connected to a positive terminal 35A and the negative side connected to a negative terminal 35B.

[0028] Rechargeable batteries 36 of the power modules 31 are nickel-hydrogen batteries. However, batteries such as nickel-cadmium batteries or lithium-ion batteries may also be used as the rechargeable batteries 36 of the power modules 31.

[0029] Although not illustrated, temperature sensors are fixed to the surface of each rechargeable battery of the power modules. Temperature sensors are devices which can measure battery temperature. Preferably, PTC devices which change electrical resistance with battery temperature are used as temperature sensors. Temperature sensors fixed to the surface of each battery are connected linearly and in series via sensor leads,

which extend along, and are fixed lengthwise to the surface of the power modules. Temperature sensors and sensor leads are bonded to battery surfaces, or for configurations with materials such as heat-shrink tubing covering battery surfaces, sensors and leads may also be attached via the heat-shrink tubing. However, in the power supply apparatus of the present invention, since one row of power modules 31 41 is housed in a partition 34 44, there is no requirement to insulate power modules 31 41 from adjacent power modules 31 41. Consequently, it is not necessary to always insulate power modules 31 41 by covering them with heat-shrink tubing.

[0030] As shown in Figs. 3 and 4, the holder-case 32 42 is box shaped having a first surface plate 32a 42a and a second surface plate 32b 42b as opposing surfaces. A plurality of rows of power modules 31 41 are arranged side-by-side in a single plane parallel to the first surface plate 32a 42a and second surface plate 32b 42b.

[0031] The holder-case 32 42 is provided with upper and lower cover-casings. The cover-casings are made up of a first cover-casing 32Aa 42Aa formed as a single unit with the first surface plate 32a 42a, and a second cover-casing 32Ab 42Ab formed as a single unit with the second surface plate 32b 42b. The cover-casings are formed overall from plastic, and assembly primarily of these casings results in the holder-case 32 42.

[0032] In addition, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4, the holder-case 32 42 is provided with walls 33 43 between the power modules 31 41 which are housed side-by-side. The walls 33 43 are formed by single piece construction with the first cover-casing 32Aa 42Aa and the second cover-casing 32Ab 42Ab, and extend from the first surface plate 32a 42a to the second surface plate 32b 42b to form a plurality of partitions 34 44 inside the first surface plate 32a 42a and the second surface plate 32b 42b. Walls 33 43 formed as single units with the first cover-casing 32Aa 42Aa and the second cover-casing 32Ab 42Ab are joined without gaps at interfaces to form partitions 34 44 which do not leak air from one to another.

[0033] Power modules 31 41 are disposed in each partition 34 44. In the holder-case 32 42 of the figures, one row of power modules 31 41 is disposed in each partition 34 44. As shown in Fig. 7, retaining projections 410 are provided protruding from partition 44 walls to hold power modules 41 in fixed positions within the partitions 44. Retaining projections 410 are formed as single pieces with the plastic first surface plate 42a and second surface plate 42b, and power modules 41 are retained in fixed positions by sandwiching them between the retaining projections 410 of both surface plates. Power modules 41 are held by the retaining projections 410 in a manner that creates gaps through which air can flow between the power modules 41 and the inside surfaces of the partitions 44. Retaining projections 410 shown in Fig. 7 are established as ribs which extend laterally with respect to the power modules

41.

[0034] The holder-case 32 42 divides the flow of cooling air and passes it through each partition 34 44. To realize this, flow inlets 313 413 are opened through the first surface plate 32a 42a to divide the air flow and direct it into each partition 34 44, and exhaust outlets 314 414 are opened through the second surface plate 32b 42b to expel air from each partition 34 44 to the outside, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

[0035] The holder-case 32 42 of these figures has valley regions between adjacent power modules 31 41 formed in the shape of grooves, and the lateral cross-sections of partition 34 44 interiors take on octagon shapes. Compared with partition 34 44 interiors having square lateral cross-sections, these partition 34 44 inside walls have shapes which come closer to following power module 31 41 surface contours. Cooling ducts 317 417, which deliver air and cool the power modules 31 41, are established between partition 34 44 inside walls and power modules 31 41. Compared with partition 34 44 interiors having square lateral cross-sections, partition 34 44 interiors having octagon shaped lateral cross-sections have the characteristic that gaps forming the cooling ducts 317 417 can be made more uniform in width.

[0036] Further, as shown in Fig. 8, partitions 84 which contain circular cylindrical power modules 81 can have inside walls with circular lateral cross-sections. Specifically, partitions 84 can be circular columns to allow even more uniform cooling duct 817 width between partition 84 inside walls and power modules 81. Still further, partitions 84 which contain circular cylindrical power modules 81 may also have elliptical lateral cross-sections.

[0037] In the holder-case 32 42 of Figs. 3, and 4, slit shaped flow inlets 313 413 and exhaust outlets 314 414 are opened between walls 33 43 and located at the center regions of partitions 34 44. The holder-case 32 42 has flow inlets 313 413 opened through the first surface plate 32a 42a and exhaust outlets 314 414 opened through the second surface plate 32b 42b. The slit shaped flow inlets 313 413 and exhaust outlets 314 414 extend along the lengthwise direction of the power modules 31 41. This configuration of holder-case 32 42 has the characteristic that cooling air can be made to flow rapidly over power module 31 41 surfaces for efficient cooling.

[0038] The power supply apparatus of Fig. 3 is provided with an air inlet duct 315 at the surface of the first surface plate 32a. The air inlet duct 315 connects with a fan 39, and the fan 39 forcibly supplies cooling air into the inlet duct 315. Inlet duct 315 cooling air flow is divided among each flow inlet 313 and introduced into each partition 34. To pass cooling air equally through all partitions 34 of the power supply apparatus shown in Fig. 3, flow inlets 313 at the upstream end of the air inlet duct 315 are made smaller than flow inlets 313 at the downstream end of the air inlet duct 315. Since cooling air supplied by the fan 39 has high pressure at the up-

stream end of the air inlet duct 315, large quantities of air can be supplied through small flow inlets 313. Since cooling air pressure decreases at the downstream end of the air inlet duct 315, flow inlet 313 size is increased to increase the amount of air supplied to the downstream partitions 34. Consequently, this configuration of power supply apparatus can supply cooling air uniformly to all partitions 34.

[0039] The power supply apparatus of Fig. 4 is provided with an outlet duct 416 at the surface of the second surface plate 42b. The outlet duct 416 connects with a fan 49, and the fan 9 forcibly intakes cooling air from the outlet duct 416 and exhausts it. The outlet duct 416 combines air flow expelled from each partition 44 and exhausts it outside the system. To pass cooling air equally through all partitions 44 of the power supply apparatus shown in Fig. 4, exhaust outlets 414 at the upstream end of the outlet duct 416 are made larger than exhaust outlets 414 at the downstream end of the outlet duct 416. Since the fan 49 efficiently intakes cooling air at the downstream end of the outlet duct 416, large quantities of air can be expelled from small exhaust outlets 414. Consequently, this configuration of power supply apparatus can pass cooling air uniformly through all partitions 44.

[0040] Further, the power supply apparatus shown in Figs. 9 and 10 have two tiered holder-cases 92 102 with the two tiers disposed in a parallel fashion in mutual opposition around the air inlet duct 915 or outlet duct 1016. The power supply apparatus of Fig. 9 is provided with an air inlet duct 915 at first surface plate 92a surfaces similar to Fig. 3 but with a pair of holder-case 92 tiers disposed on opposite sides of the air inlet duct 915. This power supply apparatus supplies cooling air from the fan 99 flowing in the air inlet duct 915 to holder-case 92 tiers disposed on both sides of the air inlet duct 915, and cools power modules 91 disposed in single rows in each holder-case 92 partition 94. In Fig. 9, 92b is the second surface plate, 93 are the walls, 913 are the flow inlets, and 914 are the exhaust outlets.

[0041] The power supply apparatus of Fig. 10 is provided with an outlet duct 1016 at second surface plate 102b surfaces similar to Fig. 4 but with a pair of holder-case 102 tiers disposed on opposite sides of the outlet duct 1016. In this power supply apparatus, the fan 109 connected to the outlet duct 1016 forcibly intakes cooling air from both holder-case 102 tiers, and cools power modules 101 disposed in single rows in each partition 104 of holder-case 102 tiers disposed on both sides of the outlet duct 1016. In Fig. 10, 102a is the first surface plate, 103 are the walls, 1013 are the flow inlets, and 1014 are the exhaust outlets.

[0042] The power supply apparatus of Figs. 3 and 4 have partitions 34 44 with inside wall lateral cross-sections shaped as octagons to allow nearly uniform cooling duct 317 417 width. This in turn allows nearly uniform flow rate of air through the cooling ducts 317 417, and prevents dead-air within partitions 34 44. However,

since the power supply apparatus of the present invention disposes power modules as a single row in each partition 94 104, even if partition 94 104 inside wall lateral cross-sections are square-shaped as shown in Figs. 9 and 10, power modules 91 101 can be sufficiently cooled.

[0043] As this invention may be embodied in several forms without departing from the spirit of essential characteristics thereof, the present embodiment is therefore illustrative and not restrictive, since the scope of the invention is defined by the appended claims rather than by the description preceding them, and all changes that fall within the meets and bounds of the claims or equivalence of such meets and bounds thereof are therefore intended to be embraced by the claims.

Claims

1. A power supply apparatus comprising:

a plurality of power modules [1];
a holder-case [2] which houses power modules [1] arranged in a parallel fashion in a plurality of rows, and which cools the power modules [1] with air passing through its interior;
a fan [9] which forcibly supplies air to, or exhausts air from, the holder-case [2]; and where-
in

the holder-case [2] is a box shape and has a first surface plate [2a] and a second surface plate [2b] as opposite surfaces, and a plurality of power modules [1] are arranged laterally, parallel, and in a single plane along the first surface plate [2a] and the second surface plate [2b];

the holder-case [2] is provided with walls [3] between the plurality of rows of power modules [1] housed in a lateral arrangement, the walls [3] extend from the first surface plate [2a] to the second surface plate [2b] to divide the interior into a plurality of rows of partitions [4], and one row of power modules [1] is disposed in each row of partitions [4];

flow inlets [13] are opened through the first surface plate [2a] of the holder-case [2] to divide air flow and induce air flow into the plurality of rows of partition [4] cooling ducts [17], and exhaust outlets [14] are opened through the second surface plate [2b] to expel air to the outside which has passed through the plurality of rows of partition [4] cooling ducts [17]; and

air flow is divided and induced to flow through first surface plate [2a] flow inlets [13] into a plurality of rows of partitions [4] using a fan [9], air is passed through cooling ducts [17] to cool power modules [1], air which has performed its cooling function is expelled from sec-

ond surface plate [2b] exhaust outlets [14], and power modules [1] disposed in a plurality of rows of partitions [4] are cooled.

2. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein an air inlet duct [15] is provided at the surface of the first surface plate [2a].
3. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 2 wherein flow inlets [13] opened through the first surface plate [2a] are made smaller at the upstream end of the air inlet duct [15] than at the downstream end.
4. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 2 wherein two tiers of holder-case [2] are disposed parallel and in mutual opposition around the air inlet duct [15].
5. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein an air outlet duct [16] is provided at the surface of the second surface plate [2b].
6. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 5 wherein exhaust outlets [14] opened through the second surface plate [2b] are made larger at the upstream end of the outlet duct [16] than at the downstream end.
7. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 5 wherein two tiers of holder-case [2] are disposed parallel and in mutual opposition around the outlet duct [16].
8. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein the flow inlets 13 and exhaust outlets are slits extending in the lengthwise direction of the power modules [1].
9. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein power modules [1] are shaped as circular cylinders, lateral cross-sections of the inside walls of partitions [4] housing these power modules [1] are polygonal with greater than or equal to eight sides, cooling ducts [17] are established between power module [1] surfaces and partition [4] inside walls, and these cooling ducts [17] cause air flow in the partitions [4] to flow along power module [1] surfaces.
10. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 9 wherein cooling duct [17] width is nearly constant over the entire power module [1] circumference.
11. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein power modules [1] are shaped as circular cylinders, lateral cross-sections of the inside walls of partitions [4] housing these power modules [1] are circular to elliptical, cooling ducts [17] are established between power module [1] surfaces and partition [4] inside walls, and these cooling ducts [17] cause air flow in the partitions [4] to flow along power module [1] surfaces.
12. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 11 wherein cooling duct [17] width is nearly constant over the entire power module [1] circumference.
13. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein the first surface plate [2a] and the second surface plate [2b] are provided with retaining projections [10] formed by single piece construction projecting from partition [4] inside walls to retain power modules [1], and the ends of these retaining projections [10] contact power module [1] surfaces to hold power modules [1] inside the partitions [4].
14. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein power modules [1] have circular column shape and power modules [1] are disposed at partition [4] centers.
15. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein the power modules [1] are a plurality of rechargeable batteries [6] connected in a linear fashion.
16. A power supply apparatus as recited in claim 1 wherein the power modules [1] are high static charge capacity super capacitors connected in a linear fashion.

FIG. 1

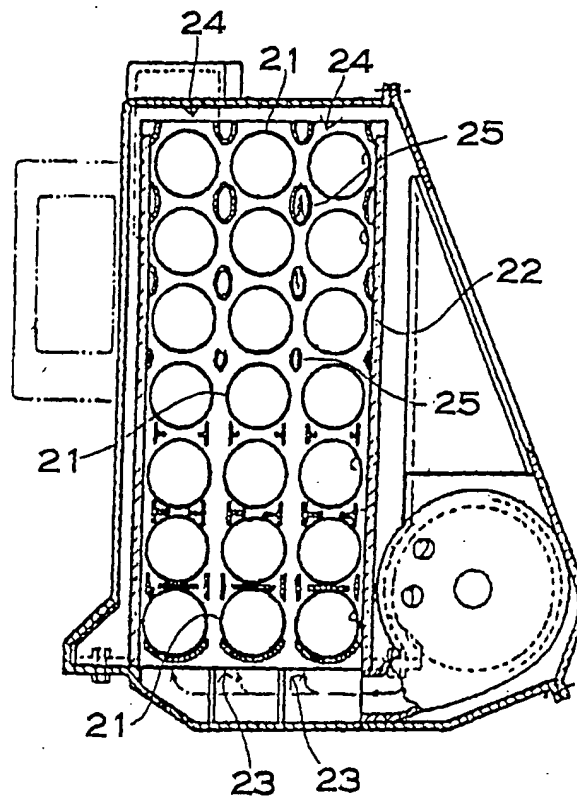


FIG. 2

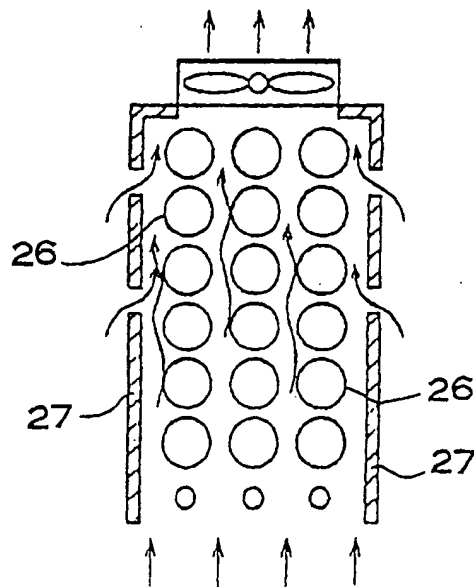


FIG. 3

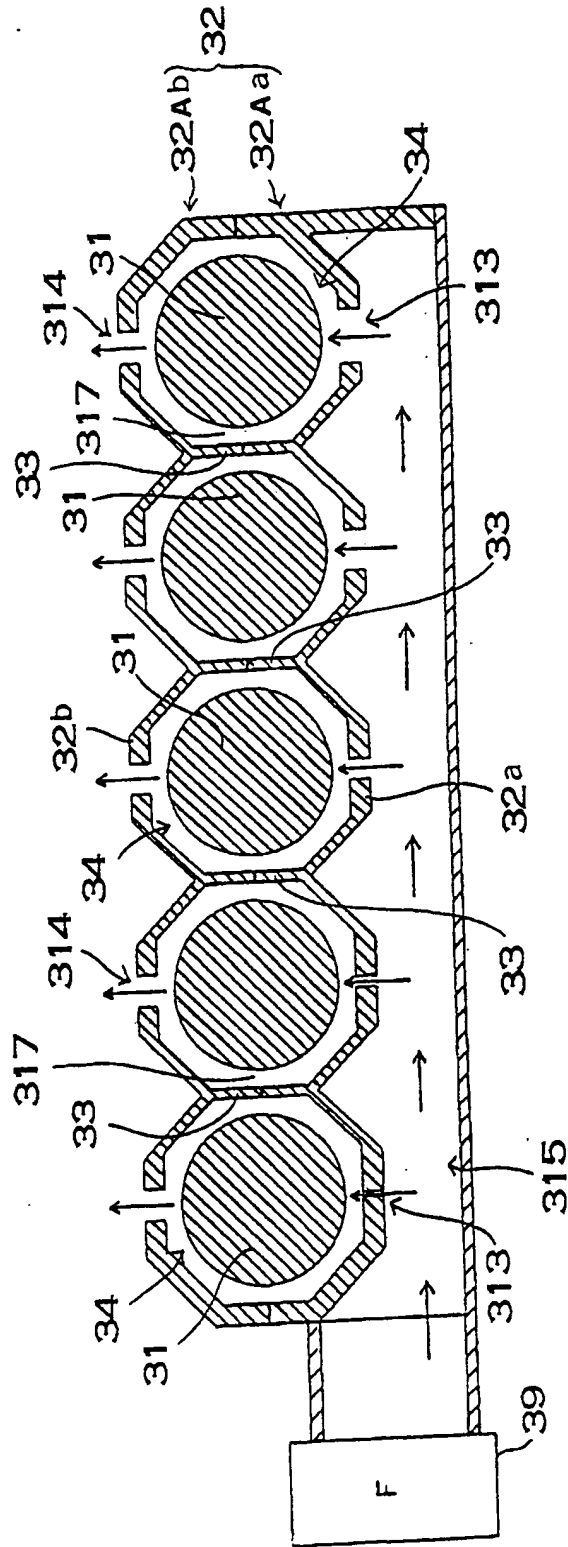


FIG. 4

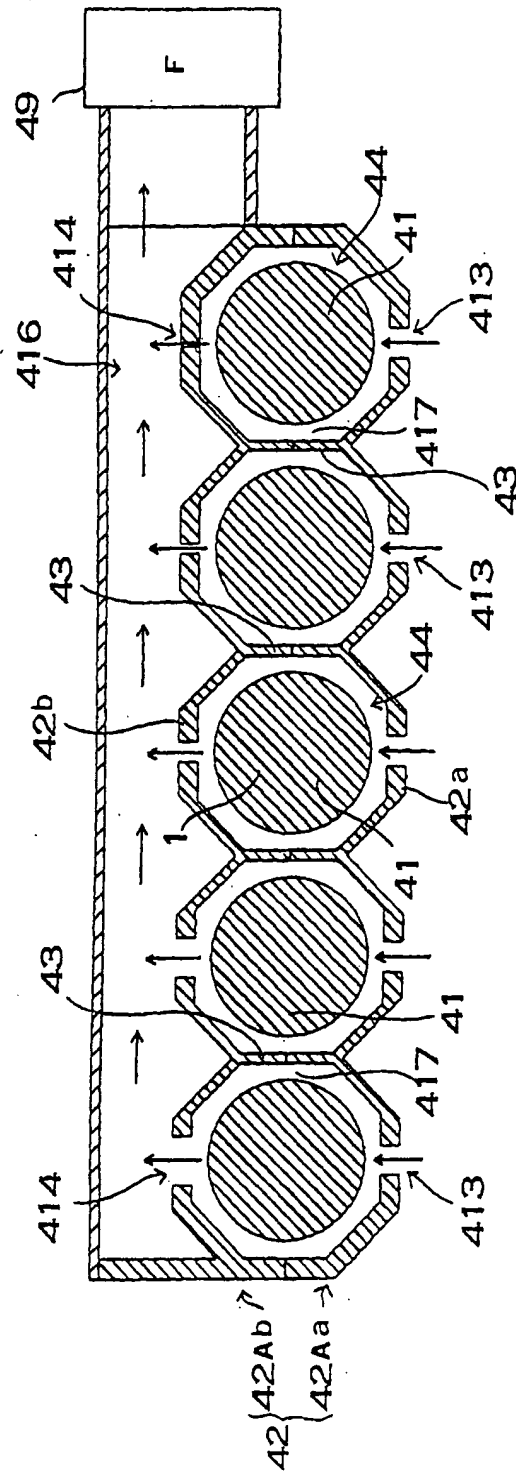


FIG. 5

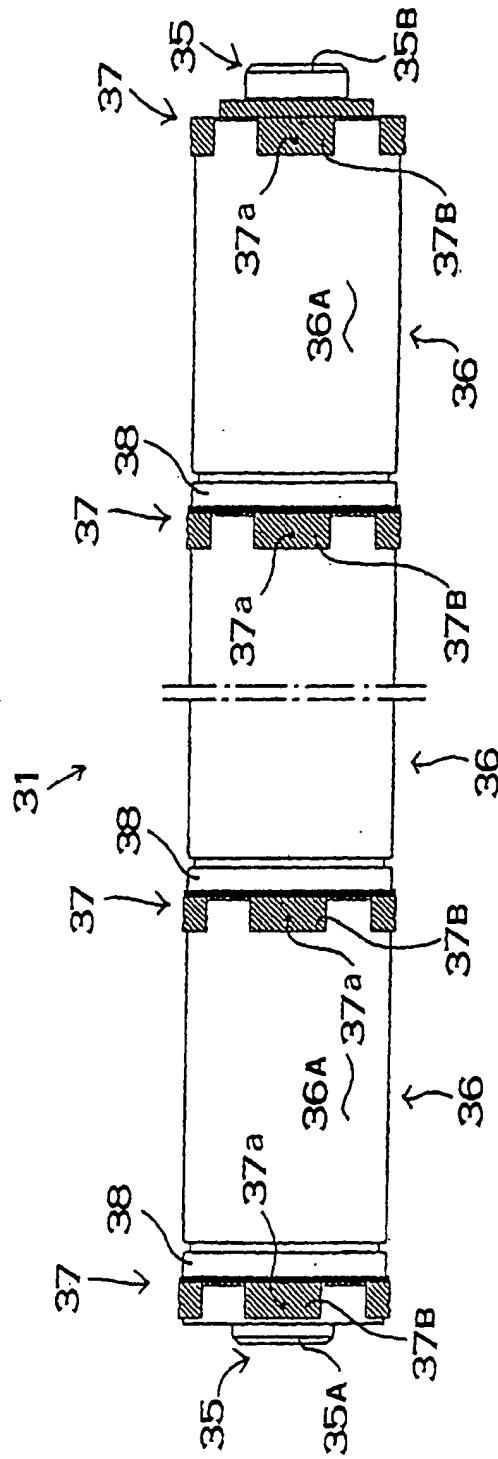


FIG. 6

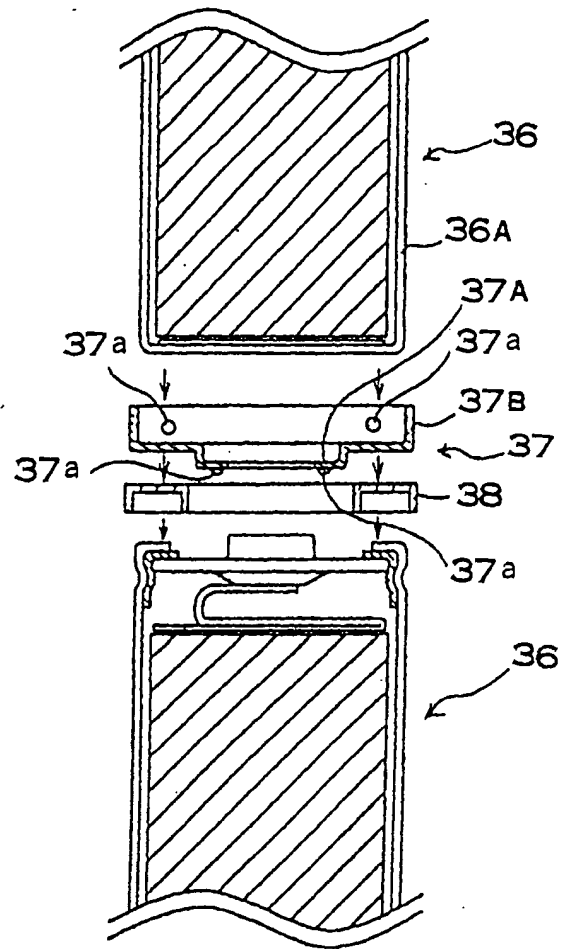


FIG. 7

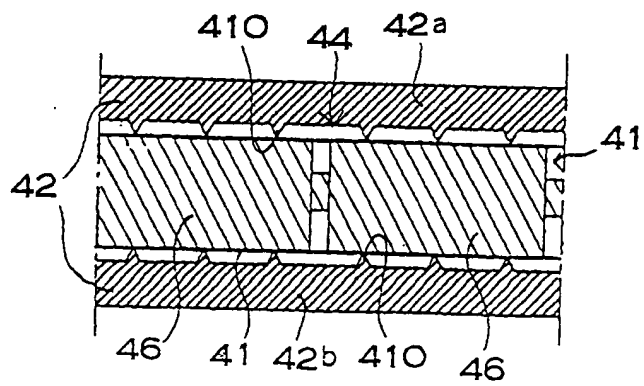


FIG. 8

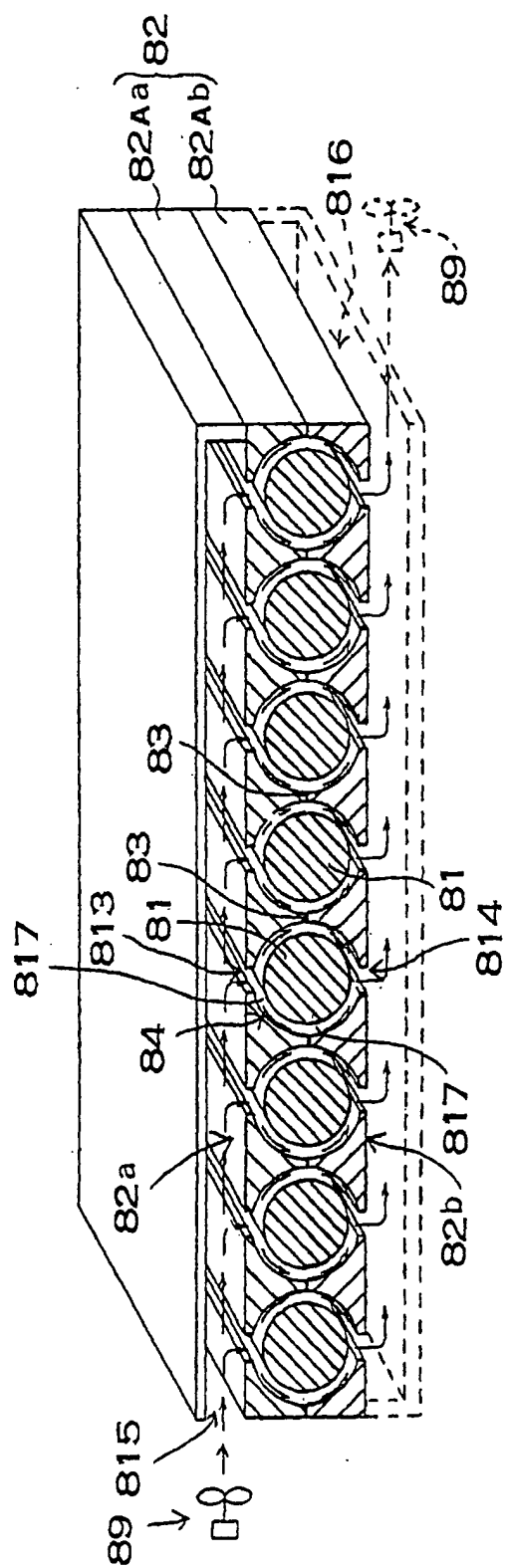


FIG. 9

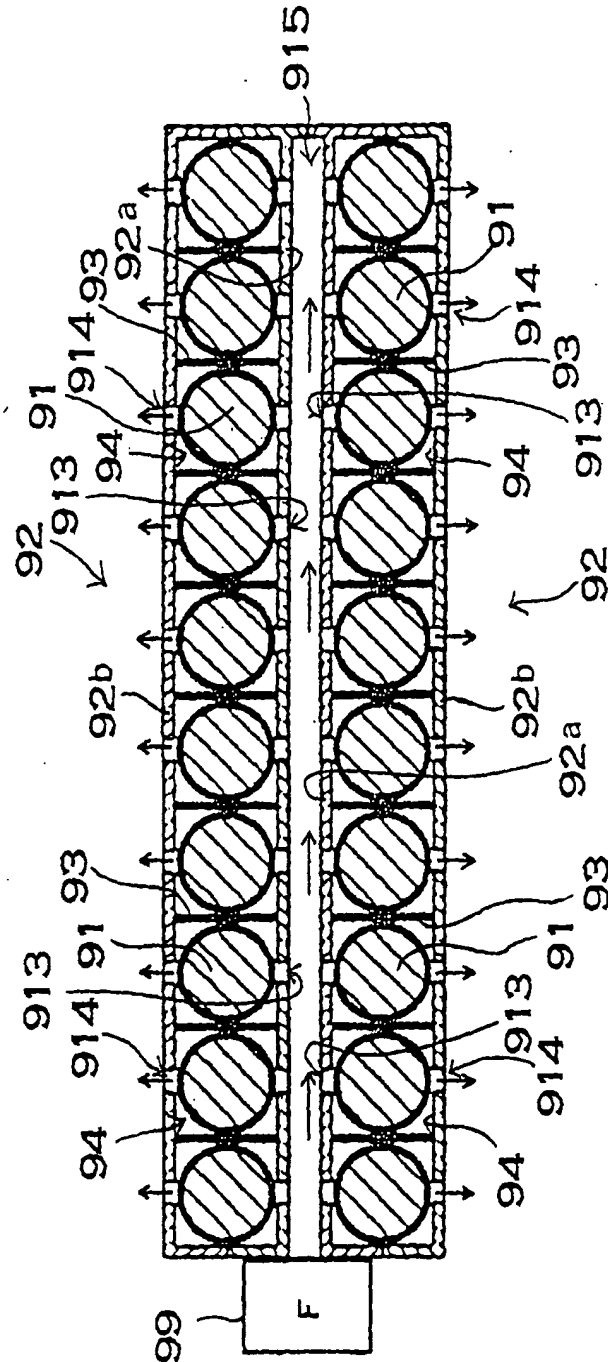
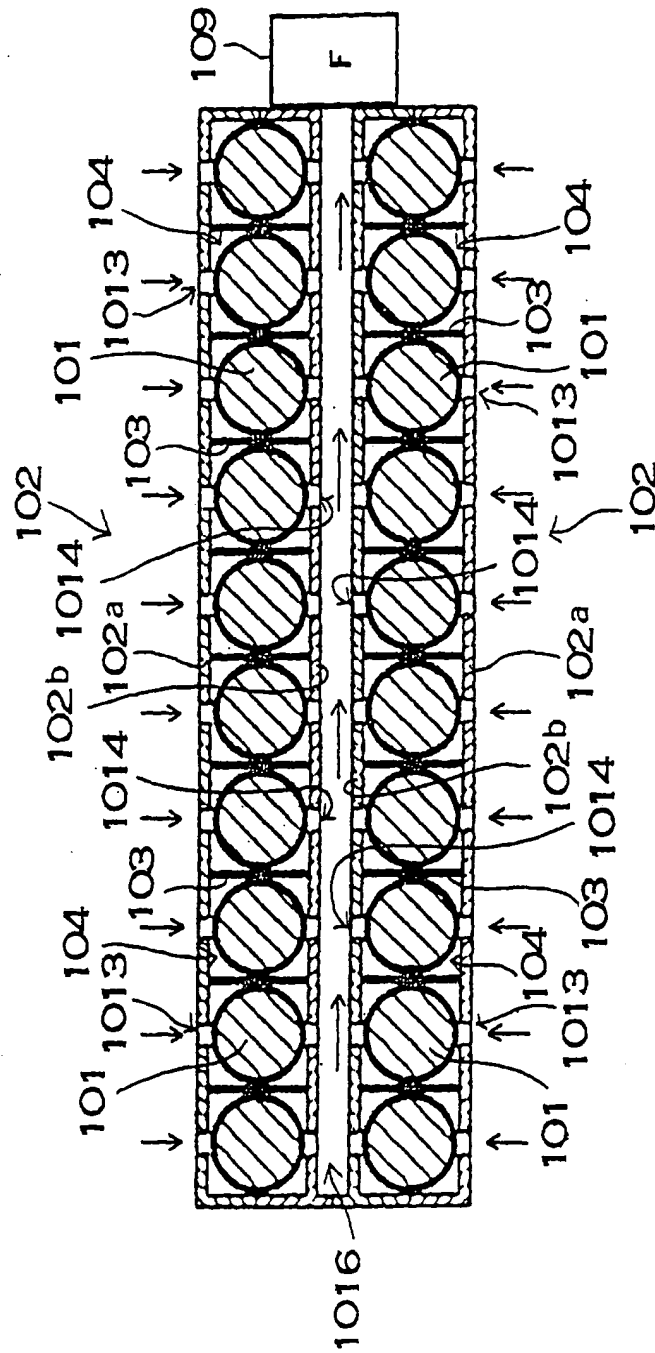
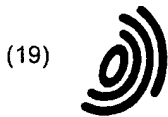


FIG. 10





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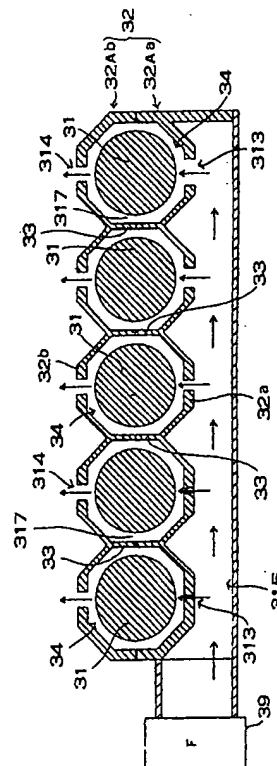
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(54) Cooling arrangement for power supply apparatus

(57) The power supply apparatus has a plurality of power modules (1), a holder-case (2), and a fan (39,49). The holder-case (2) is box shaped with a first surface plate (2a) and second surface plate (2b) as two surfaces, and contains a plurality of power modules (1) arranged laterally, parallel, and in the same plane. Walls (3) are provided between the plurality of laterally arranged power modules (1), and divide the holder-case (2) interior into a plurality of rows of partitions (4). One row of power modules (1) is disposed in each partition (4) row. The power supply apparatus uses the fan (39,49) to divide and induce air flow through flow inlets (13) in the first surface plate (2a) into the plurality of partitions (4), and expels air out exhaust outlets (14) in the second surface plate (2b) to cool power modules (1) disposed inside each partition (4).

FIG. 3



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Application Number
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 28 October 2003	Examiner Peis, S
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